

Job Stress And Poor Mental Health as a predictor of somatization among workers

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Abstract— For centuries Job Stress and poor mental health is a common evil phenomenon that has been a part of human history. The current study was conducted to determine the impact of job stress, poor mental health on somatization among workers. Universe of the study comprised of three hundred workers selected from different departments of occupational sector of wah cantt and Haripur, Pakistan. Data was collected using structured questionnaire such as occupational Role Questionnaire, MHI-38 and Bradford Somatic inventory. Statistical Package for social sciences used to test the hypothesis. Results of multiple regression analysis reveal that two predictors significantly predicted somatization; job stress predicted somatization as did poor mental health. The results have been discussed in the light of cultural perspective and implications for future research.

Keywords— Job Stress, Poor Mental Health, Somatization, MHI (Mental Health Inventory), Pakistan

1 INTRODUCTION

Adam smith categorized humans as source of capital back in 1776. In 1960, the term Human Capital was invented by economist Theodore Schultz. Later studies expounded that people working in businesses and organizations are actually an important asset for the firm because they contribute to growth and development in exactly the same manner as physical assets (for example money, machines etc.) do. They contribute in the productivity and performance of the organization through their collective abilities, skills and attitudes. Hence if the organization incurs any expenditure on its employees, it is clearly an investment not an expense (Reder & Becker, 1967).

Stress is somehow a very broad and confusing concept (Motowidlo, Packard & Manning, 1986). Many authors do not have a consensus on the definition of stress. It was first brought up by Selye (1950) in fifties and since then was employed at various occasions and in many ways (Amato & Zijlstra, 2003). However this usage was without the clear specification of what it actually means. Therefore most of the times it is considered as an umbrella concept, which means it is an unspecific, very general and vague concept that indicates an area of research where the study has been done on various topics i.e. dissatisfaction at work, physiological changes, mental health issues, sexual issues, absenteeism, violence and even accidents (van Dierendonck, Schaufeli & Buunk, 2001).

Some schools of thoughts in literature like Myung Choi (2013) claim that stress is known to be a biological, psychological or behavioral response towards the mental and physical stimuli occurring in the body of the individual. Work stress in a proper amount seems to enhance job motivation and yield (Choi, Park, Yoo, & Kim, 2013).

Health issues in relation to work have augmented for both males and females in all states specially the industrialized ones. According to the Effort Reward Imbalance Model (Siegrist, 1995) higher level of commitment and low rewards cause the occupational stress and the imbalance in turn, is a

high risk factor for mental ill health, which then contributes in the development of somatization (Roesler, Jacobi & Rau, 2006; Salavec et al., 2009). Relatively very less is acknowledged about the association between work stress and mental illnesses and somatization. The surprising thing is that since the last few decades it is seen that mental disorder rate is increasing with high speed and the importance of such disorders is also rising for morbidity.

According to Hettema, Neale & Kendler (2001), the school of hereditary epidemiology tells that along with the genetic factors, there are also other factors that develop anxiety such as environmental factors and interaction with the environment. These factors also predict depression and other cerebral disorders (Hettema, Neale & Kendler, 2001; Sullivan, Neale & Kendler, 2000). Accordingly the matter that comes to mind here is that do work related risk factors are also among the reasons for developing mental disorders. It has been concluded by researchers that work related stress or occupational stress leads to depressive symptoms in many different occupations.

Authors also argue that increasing demands of job and job insecurity have adverse effects on the workers (Tennant, 2001). Somatization is a mental health issue an uprising chaos at work place and it needs to be analyzed in detail. In accordance with Hollifield (2005), Somatization disorder is a prototype of somatoform disorders (Shima & Satoh, 2006). Here this is of key importance to note that somatoform disorders are the most common psychiatric illnesses in general practice. From the above discussion it can be concluded that occupational stress and poor mental health is increasing with the passage of time at a very high speed and more consideration should be given to it (Abbe, Harvey & Ikuma, 2011). Examining the somatoform disorder, it has seven psychiatric diagnoses which engage medically unexplained symptoms. Among these seven, Somatization disorder is the most severe one. Patients who

suffer from the disorder do not only complain about the somatic symptoms of physical disorders, rather they whine for the psychological symptoms of psychiatric disorders which are not present in them. Hence the patients exhibit both somatoform and psychoform symptoms (North, 2002).

Somatization is considered among the most ancient medical and psychiatric phenomenon that the mankind is aware of. It was recognized as a condition of hysteria by ancient Egypt, classical Greek and Roman cultures while Hysteria is the Latin root for uterus. It was thought that the uterus wanders throughout the body and aggravates a collection of physical symptoms in the area where it comes to rest.

Literature tells that many of the Freud's patients suffered from hysteria. These patients, during therapy, explained widespread histories of sexual abuse and child trauma. Initially Freud developed the opinion that these traumas cause hysteria but later with a change of heart he realized that these stories were fabricated. He did this by revising his theories reflecting reinterpretation of the allegations by the patients. In 1980, it was renamed as Somatization and this showed a revised explanation on the basis of its features and multiple medically undefined symptoms (North, 2002).

Universally Somatization is gestated as a behavior peripheral to the boundaries of diagnosable syndromes (Kirmayer LJ, 1986, Merskey H., 1979). The literature is quite clear that the phenomenon is taking rise at the organizations due to hectic routine work and peer pressure etc. so it needs to be examined in depth to find out if job stress and poor mental health are causing somatization at work place.

2 MATERIALS AND METHOD:

2.1 Study design and Sample;

Cross sectional survey of workers with affiliation of government (N=150) and non-government (N=150) occupational sector of Wah Cantt and Haripur, Pakistan was conducted using convenient sampling.

2.2 Objective Of Study:

The present study intends to investigate the impact of job stress, poor mental health on somatization among workers.

2.3 Hypothesis:

H₁: Job Stress and poor mental Health predicts somatization among workers.

2.4 Measurements:

Workers Job Stress, Poor Mental Health and Somatization was investigated by Occupational Role Questionnaire (Osipow & Spokane, 1987), Mental Health Inventory-38 (Veit & Ware, 1983) and Bradford Somatic Inventory (Mumford et al., 1991).

The respondents consists of three hundred workers who completed the questionnaire individually, after receiving the informed consent. With the returned questionnaire, confidentiality issues regarding that was made clear, and respondents was ensure that the data was only used for research purpose.

Hypothesis was test using the Statistical Package For Social Sciences (Version, 21). Multiple Regression Analysis was used.

3 RESULTS

Table1:

Multiple regression analysis Of Job Stress, Poor Mental Health on Somatization N=300:

		Model Somatization	
		95% CI	
Variable	B	UL	LL
Constant	-31.63	-14.5	-48.7
Job Stress	.19	.26	.12
Poor Mental Health	.21	.30	.13
R ²	.13		
F	23.51		

Table1 reported that Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test if Job Stress and Poor mental health significantly predicted Somatization among workers. The results of the Regression indicated that the two predictors explained 13% of the variance ($R^2=.13$, $F(2, 297)=23.51$, $p<.001$). It was found that Job Stress predicted Somatization ($\beta=.29$, $p<.001$), as did Poor Mental Health ($\beta=.27$, $p<.001$).

4 DISCUSSION

Employees are basic pillar of any successful industry. They have to carry out their professional life along with their family life. Occupational stress is a something related to stress at workplace. Occupational stress is known globally and it has some direct or indirect effect on employee's health family and social area (Ahmad and Ahmad, 1992). Occupational stress is considered as critical health issues in the modern world (Lu, et al. 2003).

In order to meet the competitive demands of workplace long hour duties, day and night struggle and challenging environment, less facilities sometime make employees vulnerable to stress and it will have influence negatively on mental health as a result they complaint regarding tiredness, fatigue, anxie-

2.5 Procedure And Statistical Analysis:

ty called somatic complaints which makes them vulnerable towards Somatization .

The current research intends to investigate the impact of job stress, poor mental health on Somatization among workers. The hypothesis that occupational stress and poor mental health predict Somatization is proved by current research and it was concluded that occupational stress and poor mental health significantly predict Somatization i.e. For Somatization ($\beta=.29$, $p<.001$), as did Poor Mental Health ($\beta=.27$, $p<.001$). Previous researches also proves this and from literature similar findings are obtained.

According to WHO (2004) it was found that uncertainty about role strick supervision poor relationship with employees and coworkers and competition leads individuals towards reduction in mental health and somatic complaints. A research reported that stress due to work leads employees towards poor mental health , stress from work and related to that environment is directly related with some health problems such blood pressure (Caplan & Jones, 1975) and somatic complaints (Frese, 1985; French, Rodgers & cobb, 1974). Another study conducted in Pakistan indicated that occupational stress is significantly related to somatic complaints (Saif- Ur- rehman & kashif -Ur- rahman, 2009).

The literature clearly indicates that physical health is impacted by occupational stress and poor mental health (Schirmer & Lopez, 2001). According to a report of research it was found that as a result of occupational stress employees are vulnerable to aggressiveness, apathy, depression, lose of self confidence, lack of interest, restless and many other somatic complaints (Vokić & Bogdanić, 2007). So from all these it is concluded that occupational stress and poor mental health leads workers towards Somatization.

5 CONCLUSION

The productivity of workplace is very important for economic development of any country and productivity viability is mostly depends on employee's psychological and physical health. Employees have to face many stressors due to inadequate supply of facilities and too much demand of work from employees. Due to too much stressor there is reduction in mental health of employees. Mostly occupational and family life mingles with each other and to meet large demands and competitive framework leads them towards reduction in mental health as a result they are more vulnerable to Somatization i.e. reported complaints of illness, tiredness, aggressiveness, boredom etc. The research opens door for other areas related to these and draw attention of people to consider the benefits provided to employees.

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